



RIVERS

# Dams and Climate Change Threaten American Rivers

By: *Climate Nexus*

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Lower Granite Dam is obstructing salmon along the Snake River in Washington.  
*Greg Vaughn / VW PICS / Universal Images Group / Getty Images*

Climate change, activities that contribute to it, and dams pose grave threats to America's rivers, according to American Rivers.

The [annual report](#) ranks the county's 10 rivers most endangered by human activity that also have a critical decision point coming in the next year that could change the river's fate.

Four dams are choking the Snake River — earning it the top spot in the report — obstructing salmon and posing an existential threat to Native American tribes in the region who depend on the fish for food, culture and their identities.

Advocates are calling on President Biden to remove the federal dams and revitalize the river and its ecosystem.

Toxic coal ash pollutes the Lower Missouri, which also is experiencing an increase in climate-driven flooding, putting it second on the list, while Iowa's Raccoon River, at number nine, faces threats from industrial agriculture.

Between them are rivers befouled by sewage, polluted or threatened by mining, and otherwise dammed or mismanaged.

"Rivers are among the most degraded ecosystems on the planet, and threats to rivers are threats to human health, safety and survival," American Rivers head Tom Kiernan said.

"If we want a future of clean water and healthy rivers everywhere, for everyone, we must prioritize environmental justice."

<https://www.ecowatch.com/dams-climate-change-rivers-2652570515.html#toggle-gdpr>